

2002 Annual Report Executive Summary

Robeson County Enterprise Community

The year 2002 brought about challenges and changes to the Robeson Enterprise Community Development Corporation. Facing the challenge of sustaining programs beyond the December 31, 2004 designation end, the Board of Directors and staff revisited, renewed and redeveloped strategies more appropriate and conducive to the needs of its targeted Enterprise Community census tracts. As a result of a nine-month long strategic planning process, the Corporation developed more core objectives and narrowed its focus which would be more responsive to the original intent of the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Initiative. In his message to the newly designated EZ/ECs of 1994, President Bill Clinton stated " . . . the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community initiative signals a new partnership between Washington and America's communities — a partnership that recognizes the importance of a bottom-up revitalization process where people can seize opportunities for themselves . . . and it rewards communities that bring together many local partners — residents, business people, state and local government, nonprofit institutions — to make these solutions a reality!"

The Board and Staff have been committed to the strategic planning effort. The process has ultimately lead to redefined areas of focus responding specifically to the needs relative to small business development and technology access and training. Today, the nineteen members of the Robeson Enterprise Community Development Corporation Board of Directors, forges partnerships and relationships to ease the delivery of services in many service areas; crossing all barriers related to race, culture, religion, class or socio-economic status. Further, the corporation has examined closely the economic conditions of its citizenry and the changing economy of the county. To respond to the devastation resulting from the numerous plant closings and layoffs, the Board of Directors and staff have narrowed its focus areas to offer clarity and greater detail of its defined goals and priorities; that being, economic development, job training and job creation. The Board of Directors and staff look forward to expanding and strengthening its partnership base while embarking upon these newly defined avenues to create sustainable community and economic development.